



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone: (651) 602-7900
FAX: (651) 602-7914

For Immediate News Release

November 28, 2005

For more information contact:
Julie MacSwain (651)-602-7859
Mark Kanable (507)374-6364

KASSON, MN, November 28, 2005 — Minnesota State Conservationist William Hunt announced the launch of a USDA Web Soil Survey site that provides secure public access to the national soils information system. This site is a simple yet powerful way to access and analyze soils data that contributes to every aspect of public and private land use and development.

"Soil surveys are the foundation for land conservation activities as well as private and commercial land development," said Hunt. "Soil survey maps help to enable agricultural producers, conservationists, engineering firms, county and city planners, and others to make informed decisions concerning land use."

Soil surveys began in 1899 as part of the nation's earliest efforts on behalf of cooperative conservation. Known as the National Cooperative Soil Survey, it has evolved into a partnership of local, state and federal agencies working together to collect, classify, interpret, and provide soils information. Today, this site provides critical soils information for land developers, farmers, home buyers, and city planners. The ability to delivery internet access to the public enhances cooperative conservation efforts.

The launch of the Web Soil Survey will bring information on soil properties and soil usage to everyone with access to a computer. People without computer access will be able to acquire soil survey information from any NRCS field office or by going to the local library.

The website has been designed with three easy-to-use features (Define, View, and Explore) and operates much like internet sites that provide locator and directional information. When viewers visit the Web Soil Survey, they are asked to "Define" a geographic area of interest by selecting the state, county or address button. The viewer can then zoom in to define their area of interest. Once a location has been defined and a soil map is created, the viewer has the choice to print the map and related information or save it to their hard drive.

The viewer also can "Explore" the designated location for specific soils data giving the viewer important information on soil suitability in relationship to usage. This flexibility provides an opportunity to build a customized report that addresses the viewer's individual needs.

Today's Dodge County Web Soil Survey Ceremony marks Minnesota's first unveiling of the Web Soil Survey. For additional information about the Dodge County Soil Survey, please contact, Mark Kanable, District Conservationist at (507)- 374-6364.

#